

# MEDREGION UPDATE

Regional Office Tunis

## Entrepreneurship and Social Change



From [www.America.gov](http://www.America.gov)

*"Entrepreneurship is a way of looking at the world and seeing not just obstacles, but opportunities; not just the world as it is, but the world as it could be, and then having the confidence, the determination, and the resources to move those worlds closer together." —Secretary Clinton, April 27, 2010, U.S. Summit on Entrepreneurship.*

## MEPI Building Capacities of Businesswomen Entrepreneurs



*Business women entrepreneurs, [www.womensown.org.il](http://www.womensown.org.il)*

The NGO Economic Empowerment for Women (EEW) is enhancing the capacities of Arab-Israeli women's micro-business enterprises through a MEPI-funded project entitled "Growing Micro Enterprises: Long Term and Advanced Business Support and Training." The project includes the establishment of a new business incubator in Acco City for business development and marketing as well as guidance on appropriate spending and savings behavior.

The EEW held two regional business fora to serve businesses in the area. The fora covered a wide range of topics including examination of the market, characterization of the market during recession, three marketing strategies, and introduction to managing a household budget.

During the first phase of the project, EEW organized a site visit to Tel Aviv Port and the Nahalat Binyamin Market. Forty-seven women, from the Triangle and Nazareth regions, whose businesses are focused in crafts and catering, attended this event. This study tour exposed women to different types of sales exhibits. They also learned about the variable quality in crafts that are sold at fairs and how items are exhibited to attract potential customers.

The women learned about the types of products that have the highest selling potential. They were challenged to evaluate the value of their own products in comparison to those that sell well at these types of exhibits.

During the last quarter, EEW organized three very successful

day-long seminars: an industry seminar for businesses in the field of hair design and facial treatments, an industry seminar for cosmetic businesses and an industry seminar for childcare businesses.

The women reported excellent feedback saying they learned new professional information in their fields. Industry trainings of this kind are particularly important for Arab-Israeli women because competition among local businesses in the cosmetics industry is strong.

These trainings provide women with an upper edge on advancements in the field and an opportunity to improve their knowledge and technical skills. ■

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We welcome your comments and suggestions.

## MEPI Online



MEPI is using new media to reach its audience throughout the region. Indeed MEPI Regional Office in Tunis has just launched a new version of the Medregion website. This new version of the website is more dynamic with a much more attractive homepage



that incorporates a slideshow featuring up to four stories, feature boxes, scrolling menus, photo carousels, etc. A 'Multimedia' tab allowing videos and audio files to be uploaded will be soon added.

We welcome your comments and suggestions.

Please visit us at : [www.medregion.mepi.state.gov](http://www.medregion.mepi.state.gov)

MEPI RO Abu Dhabi has also launched an updated webpage:

[www.abudhabi.mepi.state.gov](http://www.abudhabi.mepi.state.gov)

MEPI has also launched the Official MEPI Fan Page. in March and invites you to interact with MEPI staff and MEPI alumni. The fan page keeps fans informed about the latest news, events, and grants. MEPI encourages you to reconnect with MEPI friends, make some new ones, learn about what is going on and share your photos and videos with other MEPI fans. ■



## We Welcome a New Member to RO Tunis

MEPI RO in Tunis is very pleased to welcome a new colleague Raja Taleb Mahjoub as Grants Management Assistant. Raja joins MEPI from the U.S. Embassy Tunis's Financial Management Office, where she was a Voucher Examiner for four years.

Raja started her career as an account/auditor in Orga Audit then in a chartered Accountant office.

Raja has a bachelor's degree in Accountancy.



*Raja Taleb Mahjoub*

Raja joins Imed, Nadim, Val, and Wassila in the MEPI RO Grants Unit. ■



## Branding

*By MEPI Grants Unit*

As a MEPI grant recipient you should know that all public events, publications for professional audiences and articles resulting from the award and made possible by support from MEPI should indicate an acknowledgement of DOS or USG involvement.

A disclaimer of official endorsement should be included using the following language :

***"This project is funded through the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). MEPI is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEPI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments. More information about MEPI can be found at: [www.mepi.state.gov](http://www.mepi.state.gov)."***

The Recipient must ensure that this disclaimer be included on all brochures, flyers, posters, billboards, or other graphic artwork that are produced under the terms of the award.

In addition the MEPI logo may be provided for use on local grant project publications if a logo is needed.

The Department of State's seal may not be used by recipients without the express written permission of the United States Department of State.

Whenever the implementer estimates that the use of disclaimer of official endorsement or the MEPI logo may negatively affect the success of the project, a request for a waiver of the branding requirement must be submitted in writing in advance with justification to the project officer for a final decision by the Grants Officer. ■



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## Fida Souti: Weaving dreams into profit

Thirty-three year old Fida Souti of Nazareth is a married mother of two. Following her graduation in 2005, she established her own Palestinian embroidery business. "It wasn't easy in the beginning," she confides. But Fida steadfastly conducted market research which led her to look for new products to launch. "I created new designs and gave them as gifts to friends and family, designing customized creations for special occasions, including weddings, baby showers or just parties," she says. In this way, Fida received client feedback and enhanced her designs accordingly.



*Fida Souti*

Over time, she acquired new customers and her small business, which she operated while maintaining a part time job, continued to grow. In October 2009, she quit her secretarial job in order to devote herself entirely to her business, and today the business has become the family's primary source of income.

Fida describes herself as a dream weaver. "During the program, I dared to dream about a business of my own. I kept imagining how my hand crafts would bring about my independence, as I was acquiring the tools I needed to get the business off the ground. She even joined EEW's Business Forum in Nazareth to give her business a further boost.

Fida is also a member of EEW's 'Saving for the Future' program. Although she has always been careful with money and

succeeded in saving on a regular basis, Fida has taken her home economic skills to a new level. "The 'Saving for the Future' program encouraged me to write down every expense I incur, which helps me be more organized financially.

Fida keeps developing her business and her creative mind never stops. She is planning to enter a new niche of embroidering logos and napkins for restaurants and coffee shops, and has already secured a lucrative order from a restaurant. "Being an independent business woman has changed my life, my way of thinking and my agenda. EEW programs give me the power to move forward with positive energy". Fida's sons are happy that their mother is financially independent and they enthusiastically consult with her on new designs and business directions. ■

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## Entrepreneurship

### Entrepreneurship

Economists and business people differ in their definitions of entrepreneurship. Most, however, agree that entrepreneurship is vital for stimulating economic growth and employment opportunities in all societies. This is particularly true in the developing world, where successful small businesses are the primary engines of job creation and poverty reduction.

#### *Who can become be an entrepreneur?*

Entrepreneurs come in various ages, income levels, gender, and race. There is no one definitive profile. They differ in education and experience. But research indicates that most successful entrepreneurs share certain personal attributes, including: creativity, dedication, determination, flexibility, leadership, passion, self-confidence, and "smarts."

- Creativity is the spark that drives the development of new products or services, or ways to do business. It is the push for innovation and improvement. It is continuous learning, questioning, and thinking outside of prescribed formulas.
- Dedication is what motivates the entrepreneur to work hard, 12 hours a day or more, even seven days a week, especially in the beginning, to get the endeavor off the ground. Planning and ideas must be joined by hard work to succeed. Dedication makes it happen.
- Determination is the extremely strong desire to achieve success. It includes persistence and the ability to bounce back after rough times. It persuades the entrepreneur to make the 10th phone call, after nine have yielded nothing. For the true entrepreneur, money is not the motivation. Success is the motivator; money is the reward.
- Flexibility is the ability to move quickly in response to changing market needs. It is being true to a dream while also being mindful of market realities. A story is told about an entrepreneur who started a fancy shop selling only French pastries. But customers wanted to buy muffins as well. Rather than risking the loss of these customers, the entrepreneur modified her vision to accommodate these needs.
- Leadership is the ability to create rules and to set goals. It is the capacity to follow through to see that rules are followed and goals are accomplished.
- Passion is what gets entrepreneurs started and keeps them there. It gives entrepreneurs the ability to convince others to believe in their vision. It can't substitute for planning, but it will help them to stay focused and to get others to look at their plans.
- Self-confidence comes from thorough planning, which reduces uncertainty and the level of risk. It also comes from expertise. Self-confidence gives the entrepreneur the ability to listen without being easily swayed or intimidated.
- "Smarts" is an American term that describes common sense joined with knowledge or experience in a related business or endeavor. The former gives a person good instincts, the latter, expertise. Many people have smarts they don't recognize. A person who successfully keeps a household on a budget has organizational and financial skills. Employment, education, and life experiences all contribute to smarts.

*The above is taken from the U.S. Department of State publication, Principles of Entrepreneurship.*

*Author Jeanne Holden is a free-lance writer with expertise in economic issues. [Read more about entrepreneurship principles.](#) ■*

## Judicial Justice and its Role in the Protection of Human Rights in Egypt

The Arab Center for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession (ACIJLP), an unregistered NGO, in Egypt organized a two-day workshop on 'Judicial supervision and oversight of elections between cancellation and fair process' to raise awareness of the importance of transparent elections according to international standards. The event emphasized the role of an independent judiciary in ensuring transparency and integrity through the full judicial supervision of elections. The workshop comes about as a part of the MEPI-funded project "Judicial Justice and Its Role in the Protection of Human Rights" in Egypt.

Through this project, the ACIJLP intends to accomplish four goals: A study of legislation; practical obstacles to judicial efficiency; suggestions for reform to overcome obstacles to fair and efficient administration of justice; strengthen the capacity and enhance the practical legal skills of 300 judges and prosecutors; and publish a judicial guide on fair trials to increase awareness among the Egyptian judiciary on the importance of integrity and fair trials.

The Center felt the need to contribute to the reform process in Egypt by addressing reform of the judicial system—the embodiment of the authority of justice. This will contribute to the consolidation of the mechanisms of democracy, human rights, rule of law, transparency and anti-corruption and establish rules of good governance.

The conference's deliberations and discussions continued for two days, during which, many research papers were presented. The conference was marked by the presence of a number of distinguished professors, experts and eminent jurists in common law and constitutional law. Judges, lawyers, journalists and activists in the field of human rights made up the audience.

Participants opined that the Egypt's history of electoral and control systems formed a culture that is contrary to



*Participants interacting during the Conference*

fairness and guarantees of impartiality. Many contend that all too often election are marred by credibility in the electoral process, vote-buying, fraud and other negative actions. In addition, to the previous indicators, allegations persist that and other forms of administrative security inference have become all too common breaches of electoral processes that violate the right of citizens to participate in the management of public affairs. One may posit that citizens are denied their right to freedom of opinion and expression. Participants came up with a set of recommendations:

- The law on political rights should be amended to stipulate specifically and

clearly the role of civil society and human rights organizations in the supervision and control of elections.

- The formation of a parallel high commission or a shadow committee of the Higher Commission for Presidential and parliamentary elections.

The ACIJLP establish this committee, to be composed of judges, human rights organizations, law professors, lawyers and public figures to supervise the performance of official High Commissions. The proposed committee would review decisions of the official committee ensuing that they would not be immune from popular and community oversight. ■



### Middle East Partnership Initiative

The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), located within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, is a unique program designed to engage directly with and invest in the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). MEPI works to create vibrant partnerships with citizens to foster the development of pluralistic, participatory, and prosperous societies throughout the MENA region. MEI partners with local, regional and international non-governmental organizations, the private sector, academic institutions, and governments.

#### MEPI Regional Office, Tunis

Housed in the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, the MEPI Regional Office Tunis administers MEPI local projects in Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and West Bank/Gaza and accounts for more than \$5 million in program funding in 2010. In addition to coordinating with U.S. Embassies throughout the region, The Tunis RO provides a variety of funding opportunities (such as the MEPI Local Grants program and Civil Society Grants) as well as supporting visits, seminars and training programs to advance reform.

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